

The Classical Bulletin

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Why Study Cicero?

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My interest in the brilliant gentleman from Arpinum dates back to my boyhood and to an inspiring teacher who made Cicero live for me. As I have grown older and have studied the great Roman more closely, my interest has steadily widened and deepened and my earlier respect has come to be something very close to veneration. The man had his faults, to be sure, and some of them were serious—as any reader of the *Letters* can testify; but it has always seemed to me that these faults are of small account indeed compared to the epic sweep of his life as a whole and to his amazing achievements, particularly in the field of literature. At any rate, he is worth studying, I think, for four reasons:

First, because he was a great patriot. It would not be an easy task to defend the thesis that he was a statesman of the first order. As a matter of fact, it was his very patriotism that made it impossible for him to become a statesman, because it blinded his eyes to truth and reality. He refused to believe that the old machinery of the republic, tinkered with and pottered over by so many self-appointed mechanics, was breaking down; that the constitution, devised for a small city-state and ripped to tatters by the attempt to make it serve a rapidly growing metropolis with a ring of dependent provinces, was, in his day, little better than a sorry relic of happier times. He adored the republic and, like all lovers, he could see no flaw nor fault in his beloved. We may criticize him for lack of vision, for utter inability to apprehend the meaning of the events which he saw and of which he was a part (to paraphrase Aeneas), for blind worship of ghosts and shadows, but the great Augustus spoke the truest word of his life when he said one day to his grandson that Cicero was "a learned man and one who loved his country well." We should never forget the sublime picture he presents in his disillusioned and tragic old age, as he defies, single-handed, the mighty Antony, and battles on for the republic until his eloquent voice is forever stilled. His views and attitudes concerning the state were wrong? Yes, but he was willing to die for them: he deserves our respect—and our study.

Second, briefly, because it is impossible even to begin to understand the terrible years during which the Roman republic was tottering to its tomb, without much careful reading of Cicero. His *Letters* furnish us our best approach to his period—a fact which was recognized and noted by one of his own contemporaries, Cornelius Nepos.

Third, because he was, as Cardinal Newman has said, "the greatest master of composition the world has ever seen." In *De Claris Oratoribus* he tells us that as a

young man he overflowed his banks like a river in flood, and that when he had finished his studies in Athens and in Asia Minor he went to Rhodes and put himself under the strict rhetorical discipline of Apollonius Molo in order that his juvenile exuberance might be chastened. He was an ardent student—of Molo and of many other wise and expert teachers, and he had brilliant talent to begin with, so that he is the perfect example of Horace's sound dictum on the importance of both *ingenium* and *ars*. Cicero was a great stylist in general and in particular, if I may employ such an expression. I mean that he is impressive and brilliant whether in denunciation, eulogy, satire, theology, the technicalities of rhetoric, description, political and literary discussion, philosophy, or familiar chat; and Plutarch avers that the man was the first poet of his time! The variety of his literary interests and the supreme artistry with which he dealt with them surely make him a proper subject for our study.

Finally, because he was, in Lord Byron's fine phrase, "Rome's least mortal mind." I have just referred to the variety of his literary interests: if he had been born in a less troubled period and if he had been less ardently patriotic, there can be little doubt that he would have devoted his life mainly to philosophy. Of all ancient writers he and Aristotle approached most closely the modern scientific attitude of hospitality to truth, no matter what its source. To be sure, he maintained a private feud with Epicureanism; but, for all that, he had a noble catholicity of mind, and his philosophical essays are beyond compare his greatest contribution to posterity. In them he was, as many commentators have pointed out, the channel through which the best thought of the mighty Greeks reached the western world. But he was much more than that: in spite of the fact that the content of these essays is largely Greek, Cicero approached and carried out his task with the typically Roman motive of applying philosophy to human need, enriched and ennobled his pages with an endless procession of Rome's great men, and clothed the whole in imperishable stylistic beauty. He deserves our study.

It seems to me that young students should read first Cicero's *Letters*—the most interesting and instructive body of material we have from Greece and Rome. Next should come one or two of the *Catilinarians*, the *Oration for Archias*, the *De Signis*. For more advanced readers, the first book of the *Tusculan Disputations*, *De Senectute*, the *Second Philippic*, *De Officiis*. For the most advanced readers, every line we have today that the grand old man wrote.

Perficiendum est, si quid agere aut proficere vis, ut homines te non solum audiant, verum etiam libenter studioseque audiant.—Cicero, *div. in Caec.* 39.

The Gospel Epic in the Making

BY SISTER MARIE HELENE
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It was not until the decree of Milan had given legal sanction to the new religion that time and opportunity were offered for Christian Latin poetry. The persecutions of the first three centuries had crowded out of the lives of the Christians all artistic and all poetic cravings. Struggling for the very right to live, hounded by day and night, forced to find shelter in the caverns of the earth, theirs was neither the ability nor the desire to express beautiful thoughts. "There could be no poetry: the agony was too tragic; the struggle too unequal."¹ The Christians were constantly called upon to lay down their lives as the price of their faith. Three of the greatest writers of the day have expressed this thought in identical words: *Non loquimur magna sed vivimus.*² True, a Christian Latin prose came into existence during these days; but it was a prose made necessary by the desire to prove to their pagan persecutors the existence of the Christian God and the truth of the Christian principles.

When poetry finally made its appearance, it was produced for two distinct purposes. The religious lyric or hymn was written to be sung by the congregation, to hearten the souls of orthodox believers and keep them in the true faith. Saint Augustine's definition of a hymn, *cantus est cum laude Dei*, expresses clearly and succinctly its purpose. This form of lyric was destined to continue for many centuries and to contribute to Latin poetry in general some of its sweetest and richest music. It was destined to contain the truest expression of Christian principle and doctrine. Saint Ambrose, the Father of Latin hymnody, owed the abiding success of his hymns to the wisdom which made him adopt a meter by far the most metrical of all the ancient meters known to him, that of the iambic dimeter. His success encouraged a number of imitators, who followed their master so closely that many hymns of the disciples can with difficulty be distinguished from those of Ambrose himself. Ebert calls the hymns of Ambrose the beginning, not merely of the Christian lyric, but of true Christian poetry in the West.

The hymns appear as the ripest fruit of the process of assimilation on the part of Christianity in the formal education of the ancient world.³

The second branch of Christian poetry, one which was of much shorter duration than the first, was that of the Gospel epic. As the lyric was destined for use in the liturgy, the epic narrative had as its aim to replace the pagan literature of the classics in the schools. Here was the last stronghold of paganism. The instruction given in the schools was an inheritance of the older Greek world and was purely literary in character. The poets were the main objects of study. The student read the works of the poet, explained the text with its various allusions, and tried to grasp the grammatical uses. Parts of the poem were committed to memory.

The Christian poets, who were in holy earnest, saw the opportunity of spreading the Gospel by using the education of the schools. "With the gospel new elements

of life had entered the natures of these men, renewing their powers, . . . giving them new points of view. A new message, a new faith, a new love impelled them to exhort and instruct one another."⁴ To deliver this message, to spread this faith and love, was the ultimate aim of the Gospel-epic writers. They strove to counteract the influence of the pagan classics in the schools, to dethrone the false gods from the hearts of the young, and place therein a knowledge of the true God. Not that they failed to appreciate the beauty and value of Virgil, Horace, and others. They themselves were ardent admirers of these great poets. But the truths they wished to impart to the world of their day were of far greater import than the beauties of the pagan poets.

Their problem was not an easy one. Latin had been adopted as the official language of the Church, as the organ of her Divine word. Since this was true, she must accept also the system of education in which the language was given. But to accept that education, rooted in paganism as it was, meant to continue giving to the minds of her youthful members its "polytheism and immorality, its dangerous philosophy and its sensual love of beauty."⁵ And so these early Christian poets conceived the idea of using the form and style of the classics—in fact, so steeped were they in this culture that they could not break away from it—to convey the Gospel narrative. This they did. And their noble purpose brought results they never hoped for. Ozanam says:

They caused the truths of Christianity under this poetic form to penetrate the cultured classes of the Roman world more easily and more thoroughly. This was their object and this they attained. But that which they never desired . . . but which they nevertheless effected in a marvelous manner, was the laying hold of a later society which was no longer Roman, which although Christian was barbarous, and by means of their Christian poetry, penetrating it with the taste, and to a certain extent, with the genius and traditions of the literature of antiquity. In fact, Sedulius and Juvenius, these two Virgilian Christians, so to speak, were destined to become the favorite instructors of the youth of the barbarous ages . . . Having thus gathered disciples, they also found imitators, not only in the Latin, but also in the new languages which were being framed upon Latin models; and it was after their example that the Anglo-Saxon Caedmon undertook to sing of the origin of the world and the fall of the first man.⁶

Another estimate of the work of these poets, that of Taylor, is not so favorable, and in order to give a well-balanced picture, it is quoted also:

There was little epic quality in these poems; character as well as narratives were paraphrases rather than creations. The poems lacked unity and heroic action. Their lofty themes constituted religious narratives in which the action was not wrought out through the greatness and energy of the character.⁷

Six names stand out in the list of biblical narrative writers: Juvenius, Cyprian of Gaul, Claudius Marius Victor of Gaul, Sedulius of Italy, Dracontius of Africa, and Avitus of Gaul. Cyprian of Gaul wrote a version of the *Heptateuch*, in which he follows the sacred text almost word for word. However, in his choice of the Old Testament for subject matter, he found a wider range for his narrative than in the New Testament which Juvenius used. Raby classes Cyprian and Juvenius as "the first important names in the history of the earlier Christian Latin poetry."⁸ The literary value of Cyprian is negligible, but he was copied by Aldhelm, Bede, Alcuin, and Ethelwulf. Claudius Marius Victor, in his

three books of the *Alethia*, wrote a paraphrase of Genesis, which he intended expressly "for the purposes of Christian edification and especially to instruct the young."⁹ Sedulius belongs to the early fifth century. His *Carmen Paschale*, dealing with the Old Testament and with the triumph of Christ over death, was intended to attract "to the love of divine things the cultivated classes of his day, whose taste for poetry found its sole satisfaction in the verses of the pagan poets."¹⁰ Like Juvenius, he wanted to make men aware of the beauties of the Gospel and its superiority over the stories of the pagan gods. Dracontius, who easily holds first place among African Christian poets,¹¹ took as the theme of his *Carmen de Laudibus Dei* the omnipotence and mercy of God. He deals mostly with the Old Testament. Avitus, writing late in the fifth century, was considered by his contemporaries one of the most brilliant writers of his day. His poem has been called the most important product of the early Christian Biblical epics.¹² Milton's *Paradise Lost* has many striking similarities to the poem of Avitus and it is not impossible that the great English poet was influenced, at least unconsciously, by the *De Mosaicae Historiae Gestis* of Avitus.

Juvenius, the first of the Biblical narrative poets, merits a separate discussion.

¹ Kuhnmueneh, Otto J., S. J., *Early Christian Latin Poets*, Chicago, 1929, p. 3.

² Tertullian *Apol.* c. 38; Cyprian *De bono patientiae*, c. 3; Minucius Felix *Octav.*, 38, 6.

³ Ebert, quoted by Raby, F. J. E., *A History of Christian Latin Poetry from the Beginning to the Close of the Middle Ages*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1927, p. 36.

⁴ Taylor, Henry Osborn, *The Classical Heritage of the Middle Ages*, New York, Columbia U. Press, 1903, p. 198.

⁵ Raby, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁶ Quoted by Kuhnmueneh, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 287.

⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁹ Raby, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

¹² Kuhnmueneh, *op. cit.*, p. 348.

"Sprachgefühl"

Awakening the adolescent to "Sprachgefühl" is a noble enterprise. We are happy, therefore, to present in this issue a paper in which the distinguished Head of the Department of Foreign Languages at the South Philadelphia High School for Boys puts forth a vigorous plea for the establishment of a "general language course" in our secondary schools.

Whether Dr. Blancké's specific proposals are realizable to the extent hoped for by him we are unable to say. Movements for the adoption of fresh courses in a curriculum of long standing usually depend for their success on a host of considerations arising from circumstances that vary almost from school to school. There is another drawback to the scheme in the fact that as yet no complete agreement exists among those qualified to speak, as to "what ingredients should enter into the general language course." At the moment there are at least "three different theories" in the field.

Consequently, without wishing to take sides in this controversy, all we can say is that we are sure that Dr. Blancké's plea will commend itself to the serious attention of our readers. We are classical teachers, and

we all will admit that the teaching of the classics can and should be deepened by raising the study of Language into the prominence of a more or less definite Objective. In other words, the interest we here take in focussing attention on "a general language course" is no more nor less than that interest which every classical teacher quite naturally has in developing in his pupils a lively feeling for linguistic phenomena.

Every one that has taught the classics knows that he has singular opportunities for arousing in his pupils a nice sense of Language. Most of the principles of Language can be illustrated by material taken from Latin or Greek, and most of the terminology used in explaining them is based upon the two ancient tongues. Therefore, no matter what other departments in our school may wish to do about teaching Language, no matter whether schools do or do not prescribe special courses in Language for all their students, we at any rate hold ourselves personally responsible for making our own pupils language-minded. For this task we are peculiarly fitted. We reach Cicero's *thought* through Cicero's *words*.

On the other hand, since high-school teachers will hardly be willing to set aside a whole semester for teaching Language as a preliminary to the study of Latin, there is nothing left for us to do but to make such teaching a strong adjunct to our regular work in the classics. Not a few problems in life are best solved *ambulando*. We have years allotted to us—four, six, or even eight—for taking our students through their Latin and Greek, and that is time enough for a good grasp of the general principles of Language. The only question that can arise is, whether we have a textbook that can help us to give system to our teaching and prevent it from being desultory, a sort of "Baedeker" through the land of Language, a textbook for occasional, though well planned, excursions into this wonderland, a textbook fundamental enough for the level of the high school.¹

¹ A review of such a textbook will appear in our next issue.

"Cicero's Character"

I am prompted to comment on the contribution entitled "A Side Light on Cicero's Character" [published in the November number]. Why should we demand absolute consistency of Cicero in his attitude toward Caesar? When he delivered *Pro Marcello*, may he not have been overwhelmed with a genuine emotion of gratitude at Caesar's unexpected pardon of a most violent opponent, who was a dear friend of Cicero? Why should his eulogy of Caesar not have been perfectly sincere (despite the remark in the first column of the same page of *CB*)? As he saw, later, the increasing scope of Caesar's dictatorship, the overthrow of many of the most cherished of the traditional rights of the Senate and the magistrates, his feeling toward Caesar naturally changed, so that long after the Marcellus speech he rejoiced at the assassination of the man whom he regarded as the destroyer of the freedom of the Republic. May not similar changes of attitude be seen in recent times, both here and abroad? Cicero was not without serious faults, but better evidence than this is needed to convict him of hypocrisy.

Besides, while I am an admirer of Cicero's style, I can hardly agree with the observation that the Latin language in the time of Cicero was "rust-eaten and nicked." The fragments of Cicero's immediate predecessors in oratory show a finely developed style. Even some of the passages in the "Remains of Old Latin" show that by Cicero's day Latin was already a fairly polished instrument. I am not, of course, denying that Cicero's contribution to the further development of the Latin style was very great.

The University of Texas

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Quicumque haec lecturi sunt

eos omnes

Christi Die Natali et proximi anni Die Primo

et firma uti valetudine et optimo esse animo

omnibus cupimus votis

•

DEUS, qui Unigenitum Filium tuum constituisti
humani generis Salvatorem, et Iesum vocari iussisti:
concede propitius, ut, cuius sanctum Nomen veneramur
in terris, eius quoque aspectu perfruamur in caelis.

(The Missal)

•

HODIE, fratres carissimi, celebramus Dominicæ
Nativitatis diem, id est, Domini nostri Iesu Christi: qui
cum aequalem divinitatem cum Patre possideat, qui
cum caelum, terram ac maria, et omnia quæ in eis sunt,
pari cum Patre virtute firmaverit, in novissimis tempo-
ribus homo nasci ex homine dignatus est, sic nostram
suscipiendo naturam, ut non permutaret suam.

Permanendo enim integro divinitatis statu, assumpsit
hominem Dei Filius; nec amisit quod erat, sed sociavit
sibi quod in ipso ante non fuerat. Invisibilis ergo
secundum divinitatem Dei Filius visibilem suscepit
hominem, immortalis mortalem, impassibilis passibilem,
et, ut totum breviter comprehendam, Deus Hominem.

(S. Aurelius Augustinus)

•

SALVATOR noster, dilectissimi, hodie natus est:
gaudeamus. Neque enim fas est esse locum tristitiæ,
ubi natalis est Vitæ: quæ, consumpto mortalitatis
timore, nobis ingerit de promissa aeternitate lætitiæ.
Nemo ab huius alacritatis participatione secernitur.
Una cunctis lætitiæ communis est ratio: quia Dominus
noster, peccati mortisque Destructor, sicut nullum a
reatu liberum repperit, ita liberandis omnibus venit.

(S. Leo Magnus)

Editorial

Every classical teacher has a policy. In the back of his head, there is SOMETHING which, like a nerve centre, controls his every move. It is his conception of the goal he is striving for, and of the route he intends to take to reach it. This SOMETHING is his Morning and his Evening Star.

Writing in the CLASSICAL BULLETIN, it should not be necessary for us even to name the thing: Liberal Education. Our ideal, our aim, our business is—to EDUCATE. Well might we with old Socrates disclaim any intention of "educating human beings,"—we who have ourselves not graduated as yet from the University of Life. The word is charged with tremendous significance. But we cannot blink the fact. The moment we were enrolled as teachers, we enlisted in the army of educators. Teaching and education are not necessarily convertible terms. Of the two, teaching is the more superficial and humbler; education, the deeper and more ambitious. Teaching may aim its shafts at one or other faculty; education is a failure unless it conquers the whole man. Teaching may breed cold scholarship; education warms the heart with the breath of life. Teaching is the tool employed; education envisages the finished masterpiece.

If, then, we teach Latin and Greek, it is *ipso facto* our duty so to handle the classics as to enable the student, so far as we are concerned, to become an educated man or woman. To be sure, this responsibility is shared by all teachers, whether they teach Latin and Greek, or history, or the modern languages, or the sciences, or philosophy, or religion. In fact, the entire institution in which we are teaching is steeped in this educational atmosphere. It certainly stands or falls according as it does or does not educate. But this merely means that, while the burden of teaching is distributed over many shoulders, yet the kind of teaching done in each separate branch must be genuine. It must be bread made of whole meal.

We teach the classics because we mean to educate. Education is a complex and widely ramified process. A chart of the scope of education would be as interesting as a chart revealing the anatomy of man. But for all these numerous spiritual elements needed for the building up of an educated man or woman, the ancient classics afford a true γυμνάσιον. They are a *training* ground, a "Tummelplatz," for every adolescent craving and aspiration. It is not we that do the educating,—as a mother brings up her child by feeding him. It is the student himself that must go into training and exercise his spiritual muscles; for it is he that has to compete in the arena of life. To aid him in this achievement we have undertaken to teach the classics.

It has been shouted from the classical housetops that, in the whole range of subjects of study suited to the young aspirant to education, there is none which equals the power that goes out from the Greek and Latin languages and from the Greek and Roman literatures. One thing is certain, and one claim must be upheld, that, throughout a training course stretching over many impressionable years, the undergraduate has a right to expect that his classics will give him a powerful start in his race for a liberal education. They will, indeed,

when rightly taught, supply a healthy stimulus to his boundless adolescent curiosity. They will sharpen his wits by the simple but all-pervading processes of thinking involved in their mastery. They will train his mind by his acquiring languages highly developed and unlike his own. They will broaden his horizon by the wide sweep of the world's best thought. They will test his endurance by the relentless effort to discover that very thought for himself instead of taking it at second hand. They will connect the present with the past and show each in its proper perspective. They will refine his imagination by a vision of beauty not met with anywhere else. They will conduct him to the fount of taste, a taste that has created a universe of art. They will lay bare the very springs of human action and, by a dispassionate view, enable him to see the right and the wrong in such action. They will teach him that the *aequa mens* is impossible in this world unless he quiets the turmoil in his breast. They will warm his heart by the sight of men and women *ante Christum natum* who were struggling upward to goodness and to light. They will inculcate habits of accuracy, industry, orderliness. They will aid him in the correct use of his mother tongue. They will develop in him the power of effective and alluring speech. It is not without significance that it was a Greek that conceived the philosophy of Public Speaking, and that a Roman hammered it out for us into a more usable form. It was a Longinus, whoever he was, that traced the Sublime in the spoken and the written word. The classics offer perfect specimens of every type of literature, and the greatest men of letters have, at all times, acknowledged the spell of Greece and Rome.

We are wont to make large claims for the classics and give vigorous expression to our faith in them. It behooves us, then, to practice what we believe. Let us give our students, so far as this is possible during their high school and college course, a chance to feel the force of the classics. As the plant grows from within outward, so mind and heart grow to their full stature from within, by assimilation. But as a plant needs rain and sunshine and other external agencies, so the training of mind and heart through the classics is supplemented, in every well organized curriculum, by all the other branches of study. They all converge to mold the educated man or woman. In this spiritual metabolism every side of rational nature must be proportionately attended to: the intellectual, the moral, the imaginative, the emotional, the aesthetic, the religious. The backbone of the Liberal Arts Course is the classics. They are the Humanities *κατ' ἐξοχήν*. In a Christian school, it is hardly necessary to add, the ruling spirit is Christianity.

This is the function of classical teaching, to be an instrument of liberal education. It is as effective today as it ever was before. In fact, the very aloofness of the classics from modernity is but one more source of their subtle power. The ancient world is just distant enough to lift us above the fog of this machine age; but it is not distant enough to be remote. So much of the life-blood of Rome and Hellas has mingled with our own that we feel at home in these lands. Walking hand in hand with the men and women of anyone of the many

προφῆται of ancient life, we are close enough to the heart throbs of the men and women around us.

There are those in our midst who are (sincerely, we must suppose) entranced by that modern Siren, "Education." They would entice modern youth, as we see it, away from the very moorings of culture. It is all the more incumbent upon us to prove to the world what we stand for in the field of education, and this not only by speech, but above all by action. Unless we put forth superhuman efforts to bring the whole force of the classics to bear upon their education, we need not be surprised if alumni and alumnae regret their early associations with our classical school.

In taking our students to the ancient fountainheads we are not estranging them from modern problems nor unfitting them for modern life. Culture is timeless, the same today as yesterday. An old Roman writer of Mimes, but shrewd observer of men, has in a fine moment said:

Discipulus est prioris posterior dies:

Each day that dawns is pupil to the day just passed.

Through our teaching of the classics this dream of Publilius Syrus will come true in a manner he did not dream of. As surely as yesterday teaches today, so surely must, though our intervention, the old world continue to teach the new. In this sense, too, the March of Time is on!

Read before the Second Annual Meeting of the Illinois Classical Conference held at Springfield, Ill., December 8-10, 1938.

In Diem Domini Nostri Natalem¹

Nives et Boreas,
Regis ne quatite
Cunas asperrimas!
Leniter cadite:
Christi primitias
Doloribus ne tradite!

Oculis mitibus—
Infans qua reubat—
Bos atque asinus
Vigilant: properat
Agnus humillimus
Ad sortem, quam elegerat.

Crucem et Spinas mox
Solyma comparat:
Filiū Matris vox
Ad pectus foveat:
Orbis festiva nox
Infantem Regem recolat!

Pellite tristia,
Procul sit lacrima:
O pectora mortalia!
Cantus Angelicum
Proferat nuntium:
Sit in excelsis gloria!

¹ (An accentual rendering by A. F. Geyser, S. J., of Lionel Johnson's "Fair snows and winter wind.")

Classical Magazines

This is the proper time for renewing subscriptions. How many or how few readers of THE CLASSICAL BULLETIN subscribe to *The Classical Outlook*? How many or how few read *The Classical Journal*? How many or how few read *Classical Weekly*? How many or how few read *Classical Philology*?

"*Classicus sum: classici nihil a me alienum puto.*"

Quo Tenditis Ultra, Linguarum Doctores?

BY WILTON W. BLANCKÉ

South Philadelphia High School for Boys

If we can for a space shut our eyes and ears to alarms of war, to the hurly-burly of political embroilment and economic upheaval, to the blatant and sinister vociferations of intolerance and bigotry, let us cast a contemplative glance in fond retrospect upon the secondary school of the closing years of the last century. What do we see?

In that Golden Age, in that reign of Saturn, we find Latin and Greek still upon their throne as the handmaidens of Culture for a small and select group of young ladies and gentlemen. Prominent at court are French and German, together with English, mathematics, history, and science—very pure. The upstart Spanish is claiming a place upon the fringe, with a vulgar slogan about being “the great commercial language.” The voice of the Educator—at this period expounding some such trenchant theory as: “If the little tots grow tired, let them clap their hands and sing for a while”—is dimly heard in the distance.

Now let us awake from our reverie and gaze upon the secondary school of today. Upon the throne we see the Educator, calling the tune. We see virtually the entire populace from fourteen to eighteen years of age thronging the classrooms and studying an array of subjects unheard of in the secondary curriculum of half a century ago. We see the foreign languages, ancient and modern, starkly on the defensive and desperately fighting for their very lives.

What is the story of the intervening years?

O dea, si prima repetens ab origine pergam, . . .
ante diem clauso componet Vesper Olympo.

Let us consider but a few of the high lights.

Has it ever occurred to you that the lot of the foreign language teacher, like that of the policeman, is not a happy one? A modern foreign language is probably the most difficult of all subjects to teach. Ideally, the teacher is required to duplicate, usually in two years' time, at the rate of five school periods a week, a natural process to which the normal individual, in acquiring his native tongue, is progressively subjected through ten to twenty years, at the rate of sixteen hours a day. No other subject in the curriculum makes such extensive demands upon teacher and pupil. None calls so many different faculties into play.

Under the circumstances we should expect either that favored treatment, such as restriction in size of classes and extension of time allotment in the curriculum, should be accorded to foreign language teaching, or else that parents and pupils should realize that the age of miracles is past. Is either of these conditions true? The answer is obvious. As to the first, we all know that, far from being the recipients of favors, foreign languages are being none too politely elbowed out of the curriculum. As to the second, Mr. Average Citizen still expects that he—or a generation later, his child—should be taught (not learn, but *be taught*) to spout fluent French or German in this two years' span; or, in the case of Latin, that he should automatically acquire the ability to declaim orotund Ciceronian periods. Otherwise, *cui bono*?

How often have you heard a person (usually a man) proclaim almost boastfully that he has forgotten all the Latin, or French, that he ever learned in school? If you counter by asking him how much he recalls of his geometry beyond “a straight line is the shortest distance between two points,” or of his chemistry beyond the formulae H₂O and H₂SO₄, he may be momentarily nonplused, but will stubbornly cling to the inner conviction that there was something inherently wrong either in the subject matter or in the pedagogical presentation of his foreign language, or in both.

Here we have more than adumbrated that one of the major causes of the plight of the foreign languages is the attitude of the pupil. Now let us pose a pertinent question. How far has the attitude of the teacher not only failed to combat this attitude on the part of the pupil, but actually contributed to encouraging it?

Let us look again at the foreign language teacher of forty or fifty years ago. Was he not only too frequently a conscientious hack who, entrenched in tradition, never realized the vast possibilities of his subject and never questioned his own methods of instruction? And what were these methods? The dry-as-dust, interest-deadening grammar-translation method of teaching Latin was faithfully reflected in modern language instruction. Excellent drill masters there were, yes. But how many teachers of the period (we might say, “epoch”) ever exerted themselves to arouse in their pupils a quickening sense of the romantic possibilities of language study, a sense of the kinship of all languages and of the vital importance of language *per se* in human affairs? In those days the castor oil was generally administered without emollient, the bitter pill was crammed down without sugar coating. It was only the student endowed with exceptional *Sprachgefühl* who could intuitively extract the true essence, the gift of tongues.

What changes have been wrought by four or five decades? Primarily, we find a complete reversal of the picture. The typical “progressive” foreign language teacher of today seeks to surround the castor oil with so much syrup that its taste is completely disguised. It is difficult to discover the pill in its generous envelope of sugar coating.

It is not difficult to analyze the reasons for this *volte-face*, but it is a problem to control the forces that have produced it and to restore the golden mean (μηδὲν ἄγαν). The first significant movement was the burning question of modern language methodology. The disciples of Viëtor, with their “natural” or “direct” method, jolted the old tradition-hounds out of their complacency. The “battle of the methodists” ended in a compromise, the eclectic method, with generally salutary results.

About 1920, under the leadership of generalissimo Andrew West, “the noblest Roman of them all,” was launched the first great offensive, the Classical Investigation, designed to prove that there was something inherently educative in the study of Latin itself. Some six years later the allied cohorts followed suit with the Modern Language Study, a searching analysis of practices in that field.

The effects of these researches, familiar to every teacher of foreign languages that is not in a perpetual

coma, were far-reaching. In general, they resulted in a vivification, a "modernization" (shall we say, "streamlining"?) of instructional methods. A flood of new textbooks poured forth, all designed to make the study of Latin, or French, "live." However, except for a certain emphasis on Latin derivatives in English, there was virtually nothing of linguistics or of any attempt to develop *Sprachgefühl* except by implication. Furthermore, the harassed and hapless teacher, especially in Latin, was expected to present concurrently courses in Roman history, literature, private life and *monumenta*, as well as to teach at least as much of the Latin language as he had done hitherto. Figaro singing his *largo al factotum* was no more bewildered than the Latin teacher after reading some of the recommendations of the Classical Investigation.

Now, all through this period the Educator was swiftly rising to dictatorial power. Through his mandates all subjects in the curriculum have been required to justify themselves, on more or less utilitarian grounds. In particular, a heavy drum fire of criticism has been directed at the foreign languages, and has more recently been turned on higher mathematics. The Progressive Education Association has actually been conducting an investigation in thirty cities, with a view to determining whether to advocate the complete ousting of foreign languages from the secondary curriculum.

These attacks have been beneficial in calling forth still greater self-examination among foreign language teachers. In particular, the educators have posed the significant question as to who should and who should not study a foreign language, ancient, or modern, or both. That question is still unsettled. In fact, we wish to assert, with all the emphasis at our command, that, until the problem of "just who should study what" is solved, our whole elaborate curricular machinery of today is aimless and ineffectual. Grouping by ability, denounced by its antagonists as "undemocratic," is still a moot question. Involved in this problem is the dilemma of the public high school in being forced to lead a "double life"—preparation for college and preparation for human society. This merits a separate discussion in itself.

In this connection, a significant movement is the recent formulation of courses for "pupils of lower linguistic ability." As Lawrence Wilkins, director of modern languages in New York City, wittily puts it: "We have been selling our birthright for a mess of paradigms."

The present trend in these courses, however, is largely to substitute a smattering of foreign cultures for the study of the languages themselves. This is valuable *per se*, but learning about the manners and customs of the speakers of a language is something utterly different from the study of the language itself. Linguistics recedes still further into the background.

Another effect of the rise of education as a science, or as a demi-science, has been the production of a flock of teachers in all subjects who have devoted half of their time in schools of education to learning how to teach, at the expense of a knowledge of the subject matter to be taught. In consequence, the typical novice in the teaching profession today is a half-baked young

man or woman fired with a holy zeal to make his subject interesting, but with many deplorable lacunae in his command of the subject itself. Now, it is rudimentary that an education does not consist solely, or even in large measure, of "book larnin',"¹ but it is equally clear that the logical result of this "de-emphasis" on subject matter will mean eventually the virtual extinction of scholarship in this country.

In particular, we already note among secondary school teachers as a class a lack of language sense, a lamentable failure to realize the supreme importance of a command of the mother tongue, that sterling mark of the educated man, especially if he be an educator in the broadest sense of the word. That this is true even of teachers of English and foreign languages is often painfully evidenced. Mispronunciations of English words abound on their lips. The typical teacher of English devotes himself to the glories of literature and to critical appraisal of the "significance" of writers past and present, but disdains philology, and even correct speech, as beneath his notice. Apropos, I have even heard a Latin teacher of many years of experience, who had delivered at a classical meeting a paper on the perfection of Caesar's style, publicly rebuked by the chairman of the meeting for his numerous mispronunciations of Latin words.

Fortunately, however, there is in every generation a small but sturdy phalanx of torch bearers, who will carry on. The flame will not die. Great teachers are *rarae aves*, but they will continue to be born.

We now come to a movement which foreshadows great hope for the future. This is the establishment and growth of so-called "general language" courses, usually as a preliminary to the study of a foreign language. Perhaps the term "general language" is unfortunate. It suggests a disordered *mélange*, a potpourri, an *ollapodrida*. And exactly therein lies the danger. All such "general" courses (general science, general mathematics, etc.) can be futile unless there is a wise and well ordered selection of course material, with a clear-cut philosophy behind it and a definite aim in view. Unfortunately, there are at present three divergent theories as to what ingredients should enter into the general language course. The first type is the "exploratory" course, into which a rudimentary study of several languages is introduced, usually with a smattering of cultural background from the various civilizations concerned. The second type, fostered especially by Kaulfers and Roberts of Stanford University, offers almost exclusively a study of the foreign cultures that have contributed to our own and an insight into their abundant manifestations in our national life.²

While these two types present certain patent advantages, as well as limitations, it would seem that it is to the third type that we must eventually turn to realize the greatest educative benefit for the adolescent. This is a basic course, composed of the essential facts and processes of language, and designed to give the pupil a bird's-eye view of the rich and fertile field of language and a synthesis of the principles common to the study of all languages, including the mother tongue.

This would include primarily a general survey of the origin and development of human speech, with particu-

lar reference to the history of English and its kinship with the other well-known Indo-European languages, together with a treatment of the principles of word formation, derivation, and semantics: quite simply, a course in elementary philology. Its concrete aims would be to demonstrate the importance of language in human affairs and to awaken in the pupil a consciousness of the many phases and rich possibilities of the study, appreciation, and use of all language; in other words, to develop to the full whatever measure of congenital *Sprachgefühl* he may possess.

Would not the widespread establishment of courses of this description mark a milestone in the cultural advancement of American youth?

In the foregoing I have endeavored to set forth the principal problems that confront the foreign language teacher in the secondary schools of today and the influences that bid fair to shape his destiny in the near future. Naturally, lack of space has compelled the omission of many items of importance. Now the ultimate question arises: what shall we do to be saved?

Had I a panacea to offer, I should long ago have presented it to a palpitant world. It would seem evident, however, that certain steps are demanded of us in the immediate future. First, in collaboration with educators we should set about determining definitely just who should study foreign languages and what types of courses should be offered to pupils of varying degrees of native ability.

Secondly, all teachers of foreign languages, ancient and modern, must make common cause with one another and must desist, for example, from extolling the virtues of French culture at the expense of Hispanic, or from exalting the glories of ancient Rome over those of Germanic civilization. Fortunately, this sort of destructive dissension is fading and a growing solidarity among all language teachers is beginning to manifest itself.

Thirdly, we should see to it that the requirements for teaching positions are so raised as to admit only those who are scholars as well as pedagogues; and not merely scholars, but scholars trained in *language*, as well as in *a* language, and scholars possessed with a vivid sense of the vitality and fundamental importance of their subject. In the words of Professor Fife, they should be men and women freed from stagnation amid slipshod methods and meaningless shibboleths.

Lastly (and yet first), we should demonstrate to educators and public that, since language is the most essential tool in human society, any study that helps to improve the use of language must be granted as serving to broaden and deepen a command of the intellect's most vital form of expression; in other words, that the study of language is in the highest sense "practical" and "utilitarian" and "social" for truly educative purposes.

A concrete effort to realize this last vital aim is to be found in the systematic campaign now being formulated by the American Federation of Modern Language Teachers to convey to the educators and to the public at large, through the medium of press, radio, and non-professional magazines, a persistent declaration of the virtues of foreign language study in particular and of

the humanities in general. Similar action has been taken by the Modern Language Association of America, by the American Council of Learned Societies, and by the Classical Association of the Middle West and South.

That way, if any, salvation lies. Perhaps the present turmoil in education is symptomatic of the growing pains of our American civilization. Be that as it may, our future is in our own hands.

¹ That the populace, however, is generally convinced of the value of "knowing something" is demonstrated by the popularity of question-and-answer programs and "old-fashioned" spelling bees over the radio and by "test-your-knowledge" columns in newspapers and periodicals.

² However, the implications of the study conducted by Kaulfers and Roberts transcend the limitations of a general language course and amount to a thorough reorganization of the curriculum. See Kaulfers and Roberts: *A Cultural Basis for the Language Arts* (Stanford University Press, 1937).

Cicero at Marygrove

By SISTER MARY JEROME
Marygrove College, Detroit

Through a study of the principles and technique of argumentative composition as exemplified in the *Pro Lege Manilia* and the *Pro Milone*, the sophomore students at Marygrove are trained to develop their power of persuasion. Thorough analysis and appraisal of the text center about the *Five F's*: Fact, Fancy, Form, Feeling, and Force. *Cicero's Milo: A Rhetorical Commentary* by Francis P. Donnelly, S. J., is used as an invaluable guide in the interpretation and appreciation of Cicero the Speaker.¹

In the same year, the student is introduced to Cicero's *Letters*, which are studied in contrast to those of Pliny the Younger, the purpose of the course being to emphasize the respective differences in structure, style, content, and the personalities of the writers. In the senior year, a course in Roman Philosophy is designed to familiarize the student with some of the philosophical works of Cicero, chiefly the *Tusculan Disputations*. In this way Cicero is presented to the student as the orator, letter writer, and philosopher. He figures prominently in still another course, a Survey Course in Roman Literature. Passages from his works not previously read are then studied in English translations.

This is, briefly, what Marygrove expects her girls to get from their study of Cicero.²

¹ [Attention is called to the *Marygrove College Bulletin* for September 1931, which gives a detailed description of the strenuous course in Latin at this institution. It is there, too (p. 44), that the *Five F's* and their bearing on the study of the classics are set forth. *Ed. Note*]

² Cicero is not read in our Freshman class.

Artistry in Language

Artistry in language is as much a necessity in modern life as artistry in dress. The aesthetic instinct is as valid in language as it is in other fields of human endeavor. Consequently, children are entitled to an introduction to masterpieces of the art of oratorical prose and an acquaintance with the principal elements of artistic effect in language.—Charles A. Tonsor

Stilus ille tuus, quem tu vere dixisti perfectorem dicendi esse ac magistrum, multi sudoris est.—Cicero

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